

## SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2025

By 2025 softball will be a co-ed team sport of choice in Ireland. Softball will be recognised as both a leading provider of inclusive social, recreational sports opportunities which have been embraced by communities, the private and public sector, and for delivering professional high-performance competitive leagues embedded in every province. A popular burgeoning intersvarsity competition exists that continuously entices, engages and grows new life long participants. Inspirational performances and results of teams at a Euro and World level have forged a positive public reputation demanding regular media coverage profiling the game.

**Softball Ireland will deliver Quality Accessible local Development Programmes supported by dedicated regional centres of excellence driving Individual and Team Passion to Play Ball**

Quality Coaches and Umpires	Talent Development and Performance	Modified Game Formats	Facilities and Equipment	Marketing and Promotion	Player Retention Focus
<i>Professional coaching and umpiring will ensure <b>quality player experiences</b></i>	<i>Teams will <b>achieve on field excellence</b> at club, regional and international levels</i>	<i>Multiple <b>formats</b> of the game will <b>cater to diverse player needs</b></i>	<i>Dedicated and shared <b>facilities access will exist</b> through out Ireland enabling <b>sustainable balanced growth</b></i>	<i>Public <b>profile and recognition will drive participation</b>, fan engagement and new investment partners</i>	<i>A sport for life – the softball experience will drive <b>long term involvement</b></i>
<b>Key Tasks Actions to be developed / delivered within each work stream to enable the vision to be achieved</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and Umpire development pathway clearly outlined with qualifications and experience for progression along this pathway articulated and understood</li> <li>• Potential new coaching and umpire talent identified and supported</li> <li>• Coaches and umpires have access to a regular professional development opportunities</li> <li>• Coach and umpire mentoring programme developed and deployed</li> <li>• Coaching an Umpire recognition programme established. (awards and profiling)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent development pathway established with clear criteria for national selection into all squads and all High Performance campaigns</li> <li>• Regional centres of excellence formed and or appointed to provide regular open training and skill development sessions for players at all levels of the game</li> <li>• Regional and cross regional leagues established and or supported to drive competitive opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, package and introduce a new format of game for universities and create an inter-varsity league</li> <li>• Investigate the social sevens concept developed by Softball Australia and consider the benefits of introducing a new social league format based on its principles</li> <li>• Develop, package and introduce an appropriate format of the game for use by large commercial organisations and public sector social work teams</li> <li>• Consider the feasibility and the benefits of establishing a girls only introduction to softball sessions/packages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a regional audit of all current and potential softball competition and training facilities identifying gaps in provision/access</li> <li>• Develop a proactive plan to strategically approach local facility providers to consider business case for better access and a national home of softball</li> <li>• Look into potential for shared facility/club training venues with other sporting codes.</li> <li>• Continue to resource and provide start up equipment kits available to support new clubs/teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage pinnacle events like the World Championships and the Olympics to drive interest in softball</li> <li>• Establish incentive scheme to encourage “bring a pal to play” days. Eg create a sub s reduction for players who continuously introduce others to the game</li> <li>• Create and education a network of sport journalists about the game, tap into these journalists on a regular basis with news updates</li> <li>• Drive, vibrant social media content via face book , instagram and twitter with stories aimed at creating good engagement with clubs and players</li> <li>• Establish newsletter, which covers what’s happening and profiles new players coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a “welcome to softball” induction toolkit for use by clubs and coaches? Which provides checklist to make sure that new players/recruits are placed in the best team environment that suits their skills and background experience.</li> <li>• Provide clubs with simple guidelines for regular “pulse checks” with players to identify the good, the bad and the potential improvements that can lead to continued involvement</li> <li>• Work proactively with players to create transition pathways into on and off field leadership roles (coaching, umpires, admin) introduce the concept of buddy support system.</li> </ul>

Development to be under pinned by exceptional governance and administration, highly capable professionally run clubs with robust administrative systems and income streams